Chair in Hindu Studies
Newsletter

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This is the first newsletter to be issued on the activities of the Chair in Hindu Studies. We felt that it was important to inform the community of the initiatives and accomplishments of the Endowed Chair in Hindu Studies and how the contributions that were raised by you are being used. The support of the Hindu Community and donors is greatly appreciated and is vital to the fulfillment of the initiatives of the Endowed Chair. We hope that you enjoy this newsletter and find the information useful.

Activities of the Chair in Hindu Studies

In addition to teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the present Chair in Hindu Studies has performed a wide variety of activities which include hosting two international academic conferences, a community outreach program, publications and organized numerous public lectures. Below are outlined some of the initiatives undertaken by Dr. T.S. Rukmani since she assumed the position of Endowed Chair in Hindu Studies.

Conferences

In 1997, Dr. Rukmani organized the first international academic conference "Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives" held over a two day period and in 2001 she organized a three day conference on "The International Conference of the Mahabharata". The conferences were highly successful. The proceedings of the first conference have already been published and the proceedings from the second conference will be out soon.

Community Outreach

Dr. Rukmani has been running a weekly community outreach program since she joined Concordia University in 1996. These classes are open to the public and to community members and are conducted in the evening for two hours every week. These well-attended classes address themselves to both general topics and the study of texts in Sanskrit. The texts examined so far include five Upanisads, the Bhagavadgita, The Vivekacudamani, and The Yogasutras of Patanjali. Dr. Rukmani takes these classes very seriously as evidenced by her publishing a special translation of the Yogasutras for the purposes of this group.

Public Lectures

The Chair in Hindu Studies has organized a number of public lectures, including:

November 1, 2002 Professor George Alfred James from the University of Texas gave a lecture on:
"Grassroots Environmental Movements in India: Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions"

May 20, 2000 Panel Discussion on "Hinduism and the New Millennium" with the participation of:
Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao, University of Virginia,
Dr. Ratna Ghosh, McGill University,
Professor Katherine Young, McGill University,
Dr. Virendra Jha, Director General of the Canadian Space Agency

Professor V. Subramaniam, Carleton University

This was followed by a lecture on "Gandhi's Vision of Truth and Non-Violence" delivered by Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao.

Other scholars who have delivered lectures on the invitation of the Chair in Hindu Studies are Professor John Grimes, and Professor Subhash Kak.

Publications, Lectures and Professional Activities of the Chair in Hindu Studies

Dr. Rukmani is a sought-after scholar who has been asked to present lectures around the globe. She has put Concordia University and Hindu Studies on the map through her commitment to development of interest in Hindu Studies. Here is a partial list of the Chair's activities.

- Dr. Rukmani was awarded a one year fellowship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study Shimla.

- The Chair has a chapter in a book forthcoming entitled: "Gandhi and Tagore" in *Critiques of Gandhi*, Harold Coward (Ed).NY, SUNY

- Dr. Rukmani was invited to participate in T.R.V. Murthy Birth Centenary International Conference in Varanasi, on "Fundamental Questions and Issues in Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect" December 17-21, 2002.

- From July 12-14, 2002 Dr. Rukmani was an invited participant at the WAVES Conference, Darmouth Campus, University of Massachusetts where she gave the inaugural lecture on "The Dynamics of Being and Becoming in Hindu Thought".

- In June 2002, Dr. Rukmani was visiting professor at the Hindu University of America, Orlando and taught the summer intensive course on Patanjali's Yogasutras.

- Dr. Rukmani has been a member of the Hinduism Steering Committee, of the American Academy of Religion since 1999

- In 1997, Dr. Rukmani was a member of the advisory board of the Tenth World Sanskrit Conference in Bangalore, India.

- Since 1994, she has been on the board of the International Association for the Study of Sanskrit as a member of the consultative committee.

- Dr. Rukmani was a member of the Advisory Panel on Theology for the Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa.

Library Holdings

Dr. Rukmani and Dr. Swamy have purchased books to expand the present holdings in the University library. However, there is a need and a desire to expand this further.

The Future

The main challenge of the Chair in Hindu Studies is the lack of appropriate funding. It is urgently required that the endowment be built up so that the Chair

can continue to host guest speakers, organize conferences and lecture series and attend the various speaking engagements that she is invited to. Another important factor is the need to build up the books in our libraries in the area of Hindu Studies. The Chair would like to be able to offer scholarships and bursaries to students in Hindu Studies but has been unable to carry this out due to a lack of funds, resulting in losing some very good students to other universities.

Contact Information

For more information on the activities of the Chair in Hindu Studies, or on courses available in Hindu Studies, please feel free to contact the Department of Religion at 514-848-2065 or by email at religion@vax2.concordia.ca